

MnGeo Statewide Geospatial Advisory Council

September 29, 2010 Meeting Notes

Blazing Star Room, 658 Cedar Street, St. Paul, MN 55155

Attendees

Members: Brad Anderson, City of Moorhead; David Arbeit, MnGeo; Rebecca Blue, SEH; Will Craig, University of Minnesota; Rebecca Foster, City of Edina; Patricia Henderson, Arrowhead Regional Development Commission; Brian Huberty, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service; Stuart Lien, Clearwater County (by video); John Mackiewicz, WSB & Associates; Haila Maze, City of Minneapolis; Robert McMaster, University of Minnesota; Robert Meeks, Minnesota School Board Association; Tim Ogg, Board of Water and Soil Resources; Mark Olsen, Pollution Control Agency; Victoria Reinhardt, Ramsey County; Rick Schute, Minnesota National Guard; Stephen Swazee, SharedGeo; Gary Swenson, Hennepin County; Mark Thomas, Minnesota State Colleges and Universities; Sally Wakefield, 1,000 Friends of Minnesota; and Ron Wencil, U.S. Geological Survey.

Non-Members: Jeff Bloomquist, FSA; Craig Erickson, MN National Guard; Greg Fetter, MN Dept. of Commerce; Ann Higgins, League of Minnesota Cities; Mark Kotz, Metropolitan Council; Fred Logman, MnGeo; Nancy Rader, MnGeo; Sarah Steinhilber, FSA; and Howard Veregin, Wisconsin State Cartographer's Office.

Welcome

Chair Victoria Reinhardt called the meeting to order. Participants introduced themselves.

Notes of June 30, 2010 Meeting

Motion by Olsen with second by Wencil to approve the [notes](#) for the June 30, 2010, Council meeting. There was no discussion and the motion carried.

State Government Geospatial Advisory Council

Rebecca Foster, the Statewide Geospatial Advisory Council's representative to the State Government Geospatial Advisory Council, reported on two highlights from that council's September 21 meeting.

1. Laurie Beyer-Kropuenske, director of the Department of Administration's Information Policy Analysis Division, the State's data practices and open meeting unit, is considering introducing some legislative changes to the Data Practices Act – Chapter 13 and wanted to hear suggestions from the State Government Council. Suggested possible changes were to encourage no-cost exchange of data between government units, and to absolve government units of liability for data that they distribute at no charge. See the 9/21 [meeting notes](#) for details.

Statewide Council members indicated that the Association of Minnesota Counties and League of Minnesota Cities should be involved in this discussion sooner rather than later.

2. The State Government Council recommended two changes to the MnGeo [enabling legislation](#):
 - Extend the expiration date for the advisory councils from June 30, 2011 to June 30, 2015.
 - Appoint members of the State Government Council by the head of their respective agency instead of through the open appointments process since membership is not open to the general public.

Huberty added that tribal government should be added to the list of organizations which the Statewide Council represents; this would correct an oversight from the original list (note that tribal government is

currently represented on the council by Dawn Sherk of the White Earth Nation).

Motion: The council recommends that its enabling legislation should be amended to extend the council's term to June 30, 2015 and to add "tribal government" to the list of organizations which the council represents (Meeks/Craig). The motion carried.

Governor's Commendation Awards

Upon the recommendation of the Awards Committee to MnGeo, the Emergency Preparedness Committee, under Steve Swazee's leadership, has received a Governor's Commendation for exemplary GIS activities in Minnesota. Arbeit read the full text of the commendation, and council members congratulated the committee and Steve. The award will be presented at the MN GIS/LIS Conference in Duluth on October 14, 2010. For more information on the awards, including past winners, see this [webpage](#).

Update on USGS Budget

Wencl reported on several topics:

- The U.S. Congress passed a continuing resolution for the federal budget, so, for now, the USGS budget will be unchanged. A final budget may be passed in early 2011.
- Wencl's liaison responsibilities have been expanded to include Wisconsin during the time that Dick Vraga, Wisconsin's liaison, is on temporary re-assignment in Washington D.C.
- New [US Topo maps](#) are 80% complete for Minnesota and are available online; the remaining areas to be done are U.S. National Forest lands.
- In the recent spring floods, Chris Diller, Geospatial Coordinator for the Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs, requested that imagery be acquired to assist with the recent flood response, but the crest occurred more quickly than the imagery could arrive.

Project Updates (for more details on the projects below, see the [projects update handout](#))

1. Broadband

Connect Minnesota, the nonprofit organization that has been mapping broadband availability, is scheduled to deliver its most recent data to the Department of Commerce on October 1, 2010. The Minnesota Department of Commerce (DOC) and MnGeo are advocating that the data be provided as web services, not just as data sets. NTIA announced follow-up grants on 9/27/10, including \$2.76 million to complete work in Minnesota. Other states, who were the direct grant recipients, have been using these funds to create or improve street centerline data and point-in-parcel databases; Minnesota, however, cannot do this since only Connect Minnesota was eligible to apply for the follow-up grant. Part of the follow-up grant work will include ground-truthing the broadband speed data that the companies report.

Fetter emphasized that the DOC regulates *telecommunications*, not *broadband*. Their Broadband Advisory Council welcomes feedback from the user community about what is needed for broadband data.

2. Critical Infrastructures Data

The critical infrastructure data project received additional funding from USGS and from DNR's Firewise program to improve the stability and security of the system and to investigate adding state government buildings. The State Fire Marshall's Office will be reviewing the data on fire stations.

3. General Land Office Field Notes

Additional staff will be working on this project: David Claypool, retired Ramsey County Surveyor, and two Mn/DOT survey technicians on mobility assignment. The RFP for vendors to scan the documents is due tomorrow.

4. Orthoimagery

East-Central MN: Eleven of thirteen East-Central Minnesota counties were flown this spring for high-resolution 4-band digital imagery; QA/QC is in progress.

Southern MN: buy-up options for higher imagery resolution and partnership opportunities for setting ground control points are still open for this phase of the project, planned for Spring 2011. For details and updates about these projects, see the [spring air photo website](#).

5. LiDAR

Project areas currently planned are shown on the [status map](#). Supplemental funding to cover the remaining areas of the state that do not have publicly available LiDAR is being sought.

Committees and Workgroups

The [committee handout](#) summarizes committee activities in FY2010 and plans for FY2011.

Presentation: Emergency Preparedness Committee (Steve Swazee)
(see [slides](#) and [handout](#))

Steve Swazee presented an overview of the work of the [Emergency Preparedness Committee](#) (EPC), including a handout titled, “Revolution Underway – GIS and Emergency Management in Minnesota.” He covered why the committee exists, who it is, what it does, and where the effort needs to go from here. Future efforts were categorized from small picture to large picture: 1. EPC goals for next year; 2. Statewide Council issues; 3. Large picture issues.

Topics that led to further discussion were the development of a Geospatial Emergency Management Specialist (GEMS) training program, intended to quantify people’s ability to use GIS to help respond to an emergency, and development of geospatial resources “typing” (a system of categorizing resources using specific emergency management terms). Swazee also emphasized that the EPC needs to clarify whether it operates directly under the Statewide Council or under MnGeo.

Discussion

- **GEMS training:** Council members asked for more details about this program, e.g., was it credit-based? A series of workshops? Is there a role for existing educational institutions such as the U of M’s Masters in GIS program or MnSCU programs? It would be online, would involve Continuing Education Credits, and be a specific number of hours; GITA would provide the certification. McMaster, Swazee, Thomas, and others interested will likely continue the discussion of whether or not existing educational programs would be involved as GEMS develops.
- **Resource typing:** Meeks asked whether it was possible that typing would restrict or limit what the GIS community could provide in an emergency. Schute responded by citing two advantages: 1. the geospatial community would increase its credibility if it understood and worked within the existing emergency management structure, and 2. Typed resources are eligible for reimbursement. Examples of communities that already use typing are public health and fire-fighting.
- **After-action reports:** Members asked that after-action reports, assessments written after a major response event such as spring flooding or the Republican National Convention, be made available online.
- **Communication:** Reinhardt emphasized that when communicating with policy-makers, anything that the EPC advocates needs to be presented as concise bullet points covering exactly what action is requested, and why. Other members noted that better communication is needed with

Minnesota congressional representatives, especially Rep. Oberstar (Transportation) and Rep. Peterson (Agriculture).

Member and Community Issues

Arbeit relayed a question asked at the NSGIC meeting, “How are other states communicating with locals?” He also reported that NSGIC was forming a new workgroup on data sharing issues, headed by Curtis Pulford (Wisconsin GIO).

Huberty advocated for increased holistic thinking, as illustrated by the Wetlands for the Nation program, and also for developing a comprehensive strategy (long-term plan and funding) for remote sensing data.

Presentation: Wisconsin Advisory Council (Howard Veregin)

Howard Veregin, Wisconsin State Cartographer, described the development of the [Wisconsin Geographic Information Coordination Council](#) (WIGICC), a newly formed organization that serves as the primary forum and coordinating body for geographic information and technology in the State of Wisconsin. Currently, it is an interim body; members are discussing the best way to pursue permanent status. Traditionally, Wisconsin has had strong GIS programs at the county level as well as a number of organizations that focus on various aspects of GIS and LIS, but little standardized data or coordination at the statewide level (see Veregin’s [Too Many Cooks](#) article for a further description of the Wisconsin GIS community and advocacy for the role of WIGICC – he does not think there are too many cooks!) The Wisconsin GIO (Geospatial Information Office) does not duplicate the role of WIGICC since it focuses on state agency coordination issues and has no requirement to take advice from stakeholders.

WIGICC welcomes input from other state councils about what has worked or not worked for them. Veregin and Curtis Pulford, Wisconsin GIO, intend to maintain contact with the MnGeo Statewide Council to continue sharing ideas.

Comments from Statewide Council members:

- Different kinds of cooks are indeed needed to cover different audiences and users of GIS and LIS.
- To bring together diverse groups, think about what ALL members need and work on that. What can you do together? That will develop trust. MetroGIS in the Twin Cities is a prime example.
- Think about each group’s business needs that require integrating their activities with other organizations.
- MnGeo exists because the user community advocated for us; stakeholders need to figure out what they want to support.
- Need two-way communication between endorsed members of a council and the communities that they represent. Members need to bring their communities’ issues to the attention of the council, and council activities and questions need to be brought to the attention of the communities.

Legislative Initiatives

Arbeit listed three possible initiatives for the upcoming legislative session of interest to the geospatial community:

- Amending MnGeo’s authorizing legislation (covered above)
- Possibly amending the Data Practices Act (covered above)
- Formalizing the authority for maintaining municipal boundary GIS data

He asked members to notify him if they learn of other legislative initiatives that might impact the geospatial community.

Information Items

Draft Storm Water Infrastructure Exchange Standard: A workgroup led by Mike Trojan from the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency has drafted a standard for the transfer of GIS data about stormwater infrastructure. The Standards Committee is now conducting a public review; the deadline for comments is December 15. See this [webpage](#) for more information. MetroGIS will sponsor a pilot project to try to implement the draft standard.

2011 CAP Grants: This year's [Cooperative Agreement Program grants](#) from the Federal Geographic Data Committee will have one fewer category than last year (no Category 7: Partnerships across Local, State, Tribal, and Federal Government). The deadline will be in January. Let David Arbeit know if you are aware of any submissions planned from Minnesota organizations.

FSA NAIP 2011: Minnesota is a "Tier 3" state on the list for 2011 summer leaf-on imagery taken by the Farm Service Agency, meaning that funding is unlikely to be available (Tier 1 and 2 states would be flown first). Since the state has NAIP imagery for 2008, 2009 and 2010, and since there is also [spring leaf-off imagery](#) being flown for regions of the state, no state agency is likely to offer partner funding to increase the chances for a 2011 NAIP flight.

ESRI Grant Program for Non-profits: ESRI has recently revamped its grant program for non-profit organizations, greatly simplifying the application procedure.

MN GIS/LIS Conference: The panel "MnGeo and the Geospatial Transformation: Looking Back/Looking Ahead", will be Thursday, October 14, 3:30 p.m. If any council member would like to participate, let Arbeit and Logman know.

NSGIC Annual Meeting: Craig reported that approximately 300 people attended the 2010 annual meeting for the National States Geographic Information Council, September 12-16 in Minneapolis. There were 12 presentations by Minnesota GIS professionals. Presentations are [online](#).

Borchert Lecture: The 4th annual [John Borchert lecture](#) at the University of Minnesota will be November 19, 2010 at 3:30; Dr. Tim Nyerges, University of Washington, will speak about "Online Participatory GIS for Decision Support of Regional Transportation Improvement."

Future Meetings

2010: The remaining meeting for 2010 will be held in the Blazing Star Room, 658 Cedar Street, St. Paul, on December 29 (Wednesday) from 1:00 – 4:00 pm.

2011: Meetings are scheduled for March 31, June 30, September 29, and December 29, 2011 (fifth Thursdays of those months). The March and September meetings will be in the Blazing Star Room; locations for the June and December meetings are TBD.

The meeting was adjourned.

Notes by Nancy Rader and Fred Logman.